

pendragon
Glastonbury fair
edition

THE PENDRAGON SOCIETY

HON. SEC. MRS. J.M. FOSTER.

DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY

NICK AND CHRISTINE BRISTOW.

OUR COVER PAGE:

The thorn is an important part of the Glastonbury Legend.

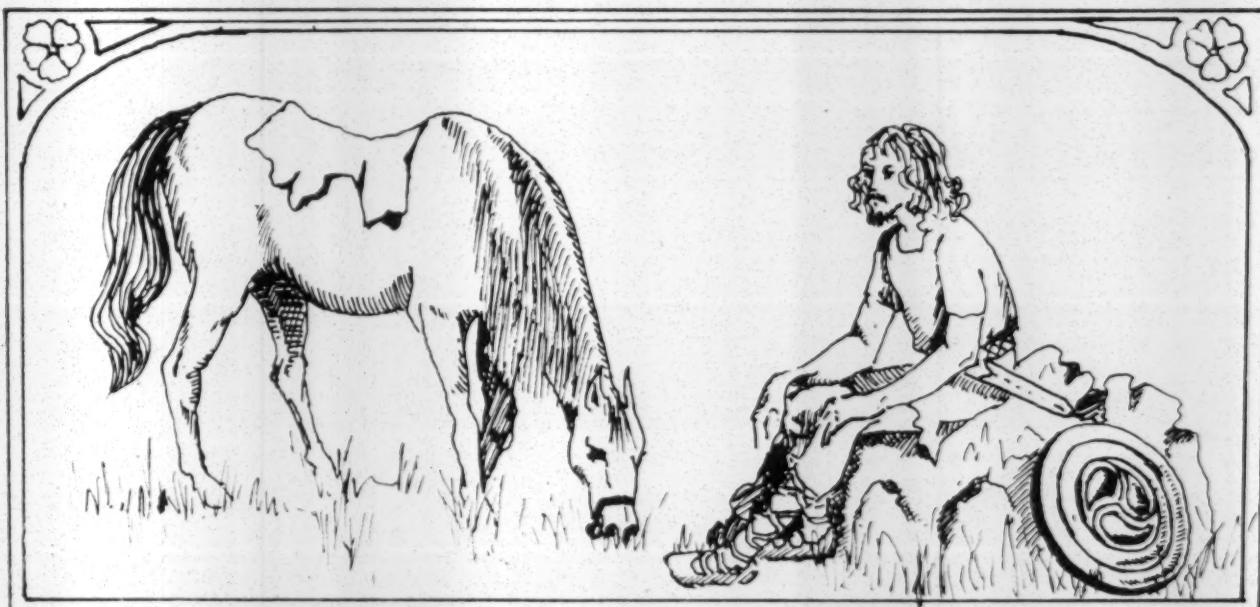
In our hedgerows the blackthorn is the earliest sign of spring.

The blackthorn is the symbol of Aquarius. (Symbolically, its purpose in life is to blossom into the rose.)

The Glastonbury thorn has been brought from the East and it flowers at Christmas—linking it with the birth of Jesus and a fresh beginning.

There are two versions of the legend. In one, Joseph of Arimathea planted his staff when he arrived on Wearyall Hill, and the staff took root. (In this the staff would represent Joseph's teaching.) The other version is that he brought with him the Crown of Thorns and buried it and it took root. (This version would be intended to teach that there can only be Resurrection when there has first been an acceptance of suffering and a death . . . death to old ideas and ways of life.)

J.F.



ARTHUR

King Arthur and his knights belong not only to the Britains but to all English-speaking countries, and even to some continental ones. The names of his knights are familiar to us all — Tristram, Kai, Bedevere, Gawain, Gareth and Galahad, to name but a few — but how many hard facts can we assemble to convince us of their real, historical existence? They are almost lost in the mists of time.

But not quite, and rightly so, because their efforts preserved for us a great many things for which we can be properly grateful.

Arthur himself may or may not have been born in Cornwall: there was a very small monastic community there at the appropriate time. Anyhow, it seems most likely that he was a grandson of Custennen Corneu. It is in Cornwall that one sees the time-battered monument that marks the grave of Tristram. In those old medieval manuscripts known as the Welsh Triads there is a story about three swineherds whose activities became involved with those of Arthur.

It is written that: "The third was Trystan son of Tallwch, who guarded the swine of March son of Merchion while the swineherd had gone on a message to Essylt to bid her appoint a meeting with Trystan. Now Arthur and Marchell and Cai and Bedwyr undertook to go and make an attempt on him, but they proved unable to get so much as one porker either as a gift, or as a purchase, whether by fraud, by force, or by theft."

If this sounds very rustic one should remember that pigs bulked very large in the Celtic economy, and when one finds oneself part of a desperate Resistance Movement rations are hard to come by and have to be well guarded.

What was the setting for this life-and-death struggle?

For close on 400 years the island of Britain had been occupied and ruled by the Romans. The British had become used to them. Many Roman families had settled in the country and married into the British communities. Romano-British boys joined the local Legionaries and were often given Roman names. Those who could afford to do so withdrew into the countryside, built themselves villas after the Roman fashion, settled down to agriculture and formed little self-contained groups, speaking Latin (probably with deplorable accents). Peace and prosperity reigned.

Then suddenly all this was changed. The Romans had troubles to deal with elsewhere and began to withdraw, taking their Legions with them, and quite soon those peace-loving agriculturists found themselves in trouble. Marauders from Ireland began to ravage the western coasts, Picts from the north came raiding over the border. Worst of all, the terrifying longboats of the Saxons came sailing across the Channel loaded with ferocious warriors who massacred the landowners, burnt down their farmsteads and carried off their stock.

The Britons sent messengers across the Channel with frantic pleas for help, but the Romans had too many troubles of their own to cope with all over their wide-spread empire. The Britons, untrained in self-defence, tried one desperate expedient after another. A Pretender called Maximus was proclaimed Emperor, for want of anyone better. He assembled something like a small army with

which he managed to restore a certain amount of law and order (though only temporarily) and then — suffering, it would seem from illusions of grandeur — he turned this into an Expeditionary Force and crossed the Channel with the avowed intention of conquering all Gaul and then marching on Rome.

He was killed outside the walls of the Eternal City and his Expeditionary Force melted away. It is thought that most of the survivors drifted back to Brittany and were the first Britons to form a colony there.

Thus further depleted of their best fighting men the Britons tried to come to terms with the invading Saxons but the Saxons were, for the most part, pagan barbarians driven by want and poor harvests at home in their own country and were in no mind to be placated. The Britons were, for the most part, Christians and pacifists and unable to impress their enemies. It was at this point that a young fellow called Arthur summoned some of his compatriots and told them bluntly that if they wanted to survive at all they would have to do it without help from Rome and by their own efforts.

It is probable that Arthur was one of those British boys whose friends and relatives had served with the Legions and therefore knew a little about soldiering. He also knew something about horses and about cavalry tactics. His Lieutenants were Bedevere, Kai, Gawain and the others. They formed a highly mobile force, followed by infantry for mopping-up purposes and they were most effective. They fought twelve great battles of which the most famous was the Battle of Badon. The Saxons were battered into some kind of submission and were at least pinned down on the coasts and unable to spread their forces inland. About twenty years later, when they rose again, a final battle was fought at Camlann, and this time Arthur himself was killed (reputedly by his traitorous son or nephew) and the resistance finally crumpled.

So it is true that the Saxons triumphed in the end but by then much had happened. Many of them had been converted to Christianity and to something like civilised behaviour. They gradually mixed and intermarried with the locals and became absorbed into the country.

The first Saxon to form a kingdom was Cerdic who, with his sons, established the kingdom of Wessex from which the future began to take shape. (Every king and queen who has ruled Britain since that time has been descended from that same Cerdic yet there is no great certainty about where he came from.) In his book, "King Arthur's Avalon", Geoffrey Ashe has written:

"We have a beginning and an end, but Arthur's track in between is fragmentary. For most of the time we catch echoes of his footsteps and that is all. The salient point about the mass of Arthurian oddments is the grandiose geography. Nobody else except the devil is renowned through so much of Britain. From Land's End to the Grampian Hills, Arthur's name 'cleaves to cairn and cromlech'. We hear of the Cornish fortress of Killiwic: of a Cornish hill called Bann Arthur and a stream called the River of Arthur's kitchen: of Cadbury and its noble shades; of the lake Llyn Berfog in Merioneth, where Arthur slew a monster, and his horse left a footprint on the rock; of a cave by Marchlyn Mawr in Caernarvon, where his treasure lies hidden (woe to any intruder who touches it); of a cave at Caerleon, and another near Snowdon, where his warriors lie asleep till he needs them; of still another cave in the Eildon Hills, close to Melrose Abbey, where some say he is sleeping himself . . . And many more such places. Arthur seems to be everywhere."

There are still unsolved mysteries such as the grave mentioned by Nennius who was a reputable historian. This grave, he wrote, is sometimes ten feet long and sometimes six feet long, and always a different length at whatever time it is visited. This sounds nonsense but an ingenious theory was put forward some time ago. Suppose this grave was a hastily-dug one after the battle of Camlann, dug on a tiny island at the mouth of a river. The incoming tide would reduce the island to six feet, and the out-going tide might well lengthen the island to nine feet.

It can reasonably be assumed that Arthur was at least a great battle-leader, at least a Count of Britain. It can be assumed that he wore Roman chain-mail, carried a white-washed shield, probably had a string of amber beads round his neck and charged into battle with a red dragon flying from the tip of his lance. But there are still few hard facts.

After five years of archaeological digging at South Cadbury, the Director of the Excavation was able to say that the ramparts were re-built and re-fortified after the Romans left Britain — that is, in the sixth century when Arthur's campaigns were being fought. He could also say that about the same time there was a huge wooden hall built on the summit of Cadbury which was occupied by an Arthur-type figure, some chieftain of considerable importance and wealth. After long years of digging in Glastonbury Abbey grounds Dr. Ralegh Radford was able to say that he had found the exact spot, between two 'pyramids' where the monks, in 1191, said they found the remains of Arthur and his queen and transferred them to a shrine in the quire of the church. The prophecy remains true, however, — "A mystery for ever the grave of Arthur".

So no incontestable proof of Arthur's historical existence has yet come to light and The Quest continues.

Recommended books:

"The Lantern Bearer" and "Sword at Sunset" by Rosemary Sutcliff. (The latter supposedly the autobiography of Arthur.)
"The Crystal Cave", by Mary Stewart. (This is supposedly the autobiography of Merlin.)
"All About Arthur" by Geoffrey Ashe. (Non-fiction.)

J.F.



ALBION

"The giant Albion, was Patriarch of the Atlantic; he is the Atlas of the Greeks, one of those the Greeks called Titans. The stories of Arthur are the acts of Albion, applied to a Prince of the fifth century."

William Blake.

"There is something personal about England . . . I will not be so daring as to define what William Blake meant by The Giant Albion; but we may agree that if the country called by poets Albion could be conceived as a single figure, it would be a giant . . . Perhaps if we were caught up by that eagle that whirled away (Chaucer) to the Gates of the House of Fame, we might begin to see spread out beneath us titanic outlines of such a prehistoric or primordial Anak or Adam, with our native hills for his bones and our native forests for his beard; and see for an instant a single figure outlined against the sea and a great face staring at the sky."

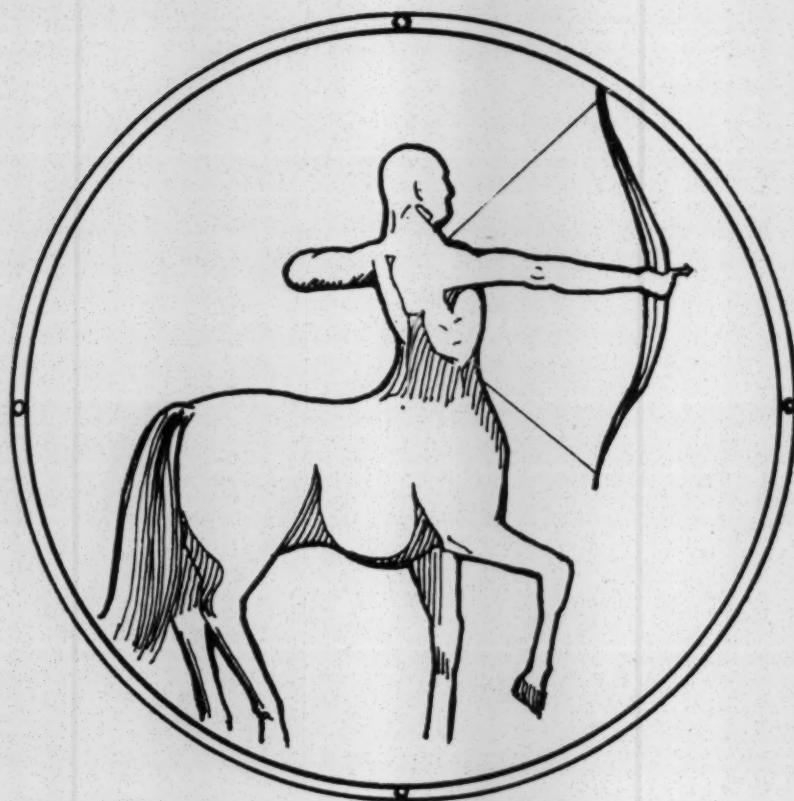
There are early witnesses for British belief in haunted off-shore islands, otherworldly journeys by water, and ghostly phenomena alien to southern experience. The classical authors who glorified the Druids, as Magi with a secret wisdom, were not building on sheer illusion where Britain was concerned. Even the golden age fantasies had a basis: the Druids doctrine of immortality. The British schools inspired an equanimity in the face of death which Hesiod assigned to the age of Cronus alone, and which, many authorities prove, was lost afterwards in non-Celtic countries . . .

Robert Graves has made a valiant attempt to identify him. He argues that 'Cronus' sounds like the Greek *corone*, a crow or raven. Some such bird is supposed to have accompanied the chief Titan. Now the Celtic legends of Britain, and Ireland too, tell of an important person named Bran . . . and Bran means The Raven. In the British legends that come down through medieval Wales, Bran is a gigantic monarch of ancient Britain. In Irish romance he is a hero who voyages west to enchanted islands, and eventually settles on one of them . . . Farther back still in the wanderings of peoples and the dawn of mythology, Bran the Raven and Cronus were conceivably one. Or the Celts could have identified their own Bran with a pre-Celtic god, a god having Mediterranean affiliations . . .

Meanwhile, the facts are interesting enough. In spite of Blakes's Druidic illusions, here in the lore of the Britons with their Druid sages there is a Titan. Whatever his nature, he proves that some such concept existed in British imaginations. Blakes' 'Albion' embodies a valid insight.

Quotes from "Camelot and the Vision of Albion" by Geoffrey Ashe.

(pub. Heinemann.)



The Somerset Zodiac

And some ideas about astrology

"A pattern is evident on the ground in the County of Somerset overlooked by the great Tor of Glastonbury and centred on Butleigh. It conforms to a circular design with a radius of five miles and a circumference of approximately 30 miles. This pattern takes the form of a zodiac or planisphere, being drawn by water courses, old roads and paths, with some earthworks appearing in appropriate places to supply details."

Elizabeth Leader in, "Glastonbury – A Study in Patterns".

"The vast difference between astrology and other sciences, if I may put it thus, is that astrology deals not with facts but with profundities. The solid ground on which the scientist pretends to rest gives way, in astrology, to imponderables. To look at man's universe with the eyes of an astrologer demands more than the exercise of logic or reason. It requires the vision and the imagination of the poet, for whom language has ever to be created anew. The language of the astrologer is entirely one of symbols – and their meaning is inexhaustible."

Henry Miller, his world of Urania. USA Ninth House Publishing Co.

"The horoscope itself is a mandala (a clock) with a dark centre, and a leftward *circumambulatio* with 'houses' and planetary phases. The mandalas of ecclesiastical art, particularly those on the floor before the high altar or beneath the transept, make frequent use of the zodiacal beasts or the yearly seasons."

C. G. Jung, "Psychology and Alchemy", published by Routledge & Kegan Paul.



The crystal cabinet

William Blake.

1757-1827

The maiden caught me in the wild
where I was dancing merrily;
She put me into a cabinet,
and lock'd me up with a golden key.

This cabinet is formed of gold
and pearl and crystal shining bright,
and within it opens into a world
and a little lovely moony night.

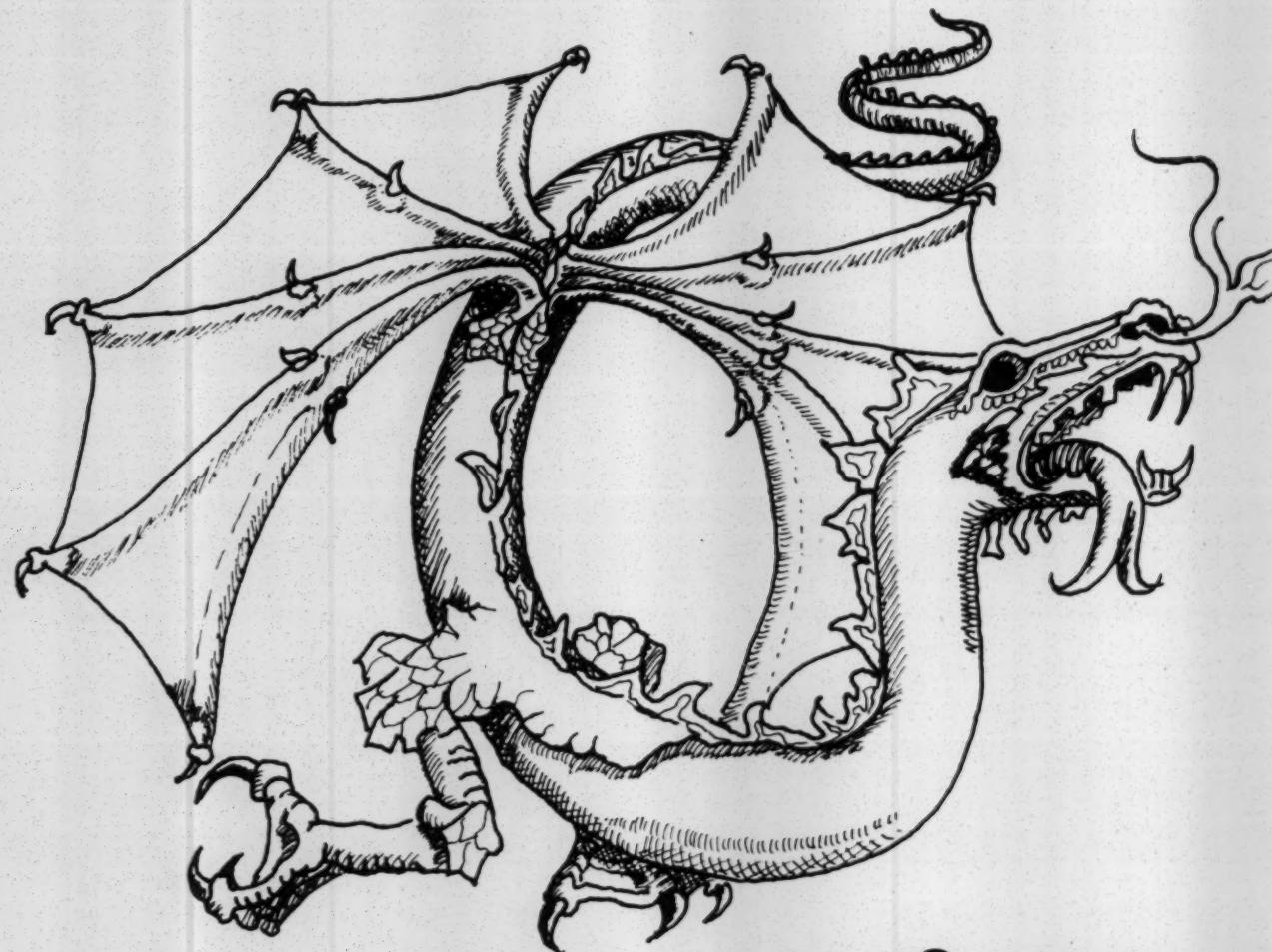
Another England there I saw,
another London with its tower
another Thames and other hills
and another pleasant Surrey bower.

Another maiden like herself,
translucent lovely shining clear,
threefold each in the other clos'd—
O, what a pleasant trembling fear!

O, what a smile! A threefold smile!
fill'd me, that like a flame I burn'd;
I bent to kiss the lovely maid
and found a threefold kiss return'd.

I strove to sieze innmost form
with ardour fierce and hands of flame,
but burst the Crystal Cabinet,
and like a weeping babe became—

A weeping babe upon the wild,
and weeping woman pale reclin'd,
and in the outward air again
I fill'd with woes the passing wind.



Lung Mei

A BRITISH DRAGON LINE AT GLASTONBURY

To men of the 18th century such as Dr. Stukeley, the great antiquarian and Arch Druid, Britain was the Holy Land, the place of vision containing the vessel of enlightenment, the Holy Grail. As Blake said: "All things begin and end in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore." Somewhere enfolded in the landscape itself lay the key to mysteries known in the past and destined to be revealed in the future. Stukeley was the first to see the ancient monuments of Britain not only individually but as part of a great pattern, truly meaningful only when viewed panoramically as a whole. Etched into the very face of the country could be found a system of signs and symbols revealing to its initiates the true spirit of the past and the path to the future.

Those who rely on the arbitrary values of modern science with its disregard for the purpose of knowledge and of true wisdom have naturally rejected the belief that a great tradition has been preserved for our use to-day, or that any native alchemical system ever existed of the sort that has been preserved more openly in the East. And it has been fashionable to belittle its last guardians the Druids who inherited their knowledge of the holy places and centres and lines of power in the country from their predecessors, the great native astronomers, who divided the country according to the laws of geomancy and laid out instruments of precision such as the wonderful stone computer, Stonehenge.

The recent revelations by Hawkins and Hoyle of the true meaning and barely conceivable delicacy of this monument should now have opened our eyes to something of the mystery contained within the landscape, the secrets towards which the scholars of the 18th century were groping before the rise of myopic sciences such as that of modern archaeology. Recently several clues have come to light. The first is the discovery of the British dragon lines, called by the Chinese Lung Mei.

The Chinese knew the dragon as a bright light moving across the night sky, the same phenomenon as gives rise to the legend of the flying saucers to-day. They regarded the dragon as a benevolent power, the spirit of life, the source of all good. The Lung Mei, the lines along which it was seen to move, were mapped out and so revered that the land along their courses was reserved for the exclusive use of the Imperial Family. Even at the beginning of this century no one else might live or be buried along these lines.

The charting of the sites in Britain connected with the dragon legend, the hills or mounds said to be the place of a killing or of the appearance of a dragon, has revealed that at least three Lung Mei run across the face of this country, linking up most of those sites with three straight lines. One such line runs from Farne Island off the tip of Northumberland and passes just east of Taunton. The other, intersecting it at Longwinton in Northumberland, runs from east of Linton in Roxburghshire to St. Osyth's in Essex, leaving England at Pegwell Bay, the scene of Dyce's great visionary picture in the Tate.

A third, the most clearly identifiable of these lines, passes over Glastonbury Tor on its way from St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall to the coast on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk. The cult of the dragon that flourished along that line is remembered in the numerous St. Michael and St. George dedications of the churches along its route, built on the high places which marked its route, for those saints were chosen by the Christian Church to confirm the suppression of the dragon cult which preceded it. North Brentor, Burrow Bridge Mump, the Tor and Silbury Hill are some of the siting points on its way, and its direction can be checked at certain centres of alignment such as the aptly named Eye in Suffolk where the relative positions of mound, church and abbey point its course.

Glastonbury, the prime centre of the cult of the dragon and of the pre-Christian astronomical religion as well as, by an adaptation of its legend, of the Christian Church itself, was the place from which the line was chiefly assessed. Like the great hill outside Peking from which every year the Emperor renewed the sacred alignments, the Tor may have been surrounded by an astronomical garden, a feature which one might see in the Zodiacial Giants, first defined on paper by Mrs. Maltwood and refined by the great contemporary geomancer, Ken Knight. The dragon line itself follows exactly the alignment of the ridge of the Tor. Two stone pillars erected, one on the summit and one on the lower peak towards the western end of the ridge and just visible from the base of the present tower, gave the line of the great dragon of southern England.

Its re-discovery and our progress towards fuller knowledge of its implications mark a stage towards the ending of the Enchantment of Britain, the achievement of the Grail, the re-invocation of King Arthur, the sleeping king who will awaken to restore the true spirit of Britain.

John Michell



There are dragons and dragons — and of course many other dragons of all shapes, colours and sizes.

According to Robert Graves the Chinese dragon came to Britain by way of Byzantium: no doubt he is right. Anyhow, the Britons of those times took refuge finally in Wales and have kept their red dragons till the present day.

Uther — father of Arthur — acquired the title of Pendragon when he was appointed leader of the British forces on the death of Ambrosius — Pen being the Celtic word for 'head' or 'leader'. Arthur, therefore, was born into the House of Pendragon just as the present Prince of Wales was born into the House of Windsor.

The origin of the Pendragon standard or flag can be traced with reasonable accuracy and the probable evolution of its use has been the subject of research in aeronautical engineering circles for some time.

During medieval times an invention came to the notice of many of the writers of that time which was superficially similar to a kite. This kite had a body like an elongated dragon and was in fact a "semi-kite". The German word for such a device was "warmluft-drachen".

Conrad Kyeser in his *Belfortis* (1505 A.D.) wrote:-

"Draco volans iste formetur capite perga meium sit lineum cauda tamen servicea sit colores diversi fine capitis sit tripla zona ligno coadiuncta medio ventilabro mota capud versus ventum ponatur quo tunc assumpto duo levent capud tertius ventilabrum portet equo sequatur eum corda mota movetur volatus sursum dorsum dextrotsum & sinistrorum capud sit depictum rubeo colore que fictum medio lunaris coloris fine diversi."

"This flying dragon may be made with parchment for the head, the middle of linen, but the tail of silk, the colours various. At the end of the head let a triple harness (bridle) be attached to the wood, moved by the middle of the flail (shaped reel). Let the head be raised into the wind and when it has been lifted, follows him while he rides (or 'he follows it as he rides'). The movement of the line causes the flight to vary up and down, to right and left. Let the head be coloured red and made to look real, the middle should be of moon-silver colour, the end of several colours."

On the previous page of the *Belfortis*, page 104, there is a passage headed "Ignis Pro Tygace Volante", and contains a formula for fire-producing materials. This was presumed to be meant for the draco (kite) and therefore the draco and tygax can be presumed to be identical. The subsequent works of Romocki, Berthelot and Feldhaus have supported this supposition. This fire-producing dragon consisted of a hollow tube into one end of which a container of fire could be introduced. This "fired up" windsock was thought to be derived from the hollow dragon standard which became familiar in Europe during the latter period of the decline of the Roman Empire. A metal ring supported the mouth of the hollow tube of cloth. The wind was allowed to blow into the mouth of the metal ring which was supported by a pole and the dragon standard was allowed to billow out in the wind. The Romans took the idea from Eastern peoples before adopting it at some time between 100 and 300 A.D.

This draco was used to instil fear into the enemy and to inspire courage in troops, and for ceremonial purposes. It was used continuously in Europe until the Middle Ages. This is proven by its appearance in the *Psalterium Aurem* (9th century) and in the *Bayeux Tapestry*. The *Warmluftdrachen* developed from the draco standard according to popular theory in aviation circles.

It is but a step from our research to assume with a high probability factor that the dragon standard used by the Romans was adopted by a Dux Bellorum such as Artorius, Ambrosius or some other Romano-British leader of the day. This again brings to mind the word Pendragon which in the Celtic tongue means "Dragon's Head" and probably became the battle standard of the Dux Bellorum. As the standard was certainly in use by the Romans in 400 A.D. and later by the Saxons (9th century) and shown in the *Bayeux Tapestry* (11th century) it is more than probable that this was the origin of the Pendragon Standard.

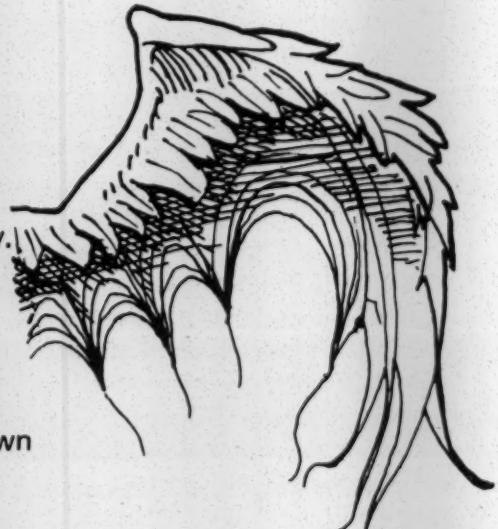
The Dark Ages being dark in knowledge as they are, we can only calculate probabilities in the light of proven facts and a percentage of circumstantial evidence.

Research by L. C. Gowers.



from 'The quest'. Aleister Crowley.

Apart, immutable, unseen,
Being, before itself had been,
Became. Like dew a triple queen
Shone as the void uncovered:
The silence of deep height has drawn
A veil across the silver dawn
On holy wings that hovered.



BLACKTHORN

A poem for three voices:

Roger Davie Webster.

1st voice 'Who is the smile of procreation?'

2nd voice 'She is Cyridwen,
whose cup inspired
all mankind
before the darkness.'

1st 'Who walks with her
about the seven ringed tower?'

2nd 'Albion will walk with her
when he is awokened
from his dreaming.'

1st 'What does Albion dream?'

2nd 'He dreams the dream of Olwen
and will awaken
when the golden bell
tolls aloud
with seven chimes of peace.'

1st 'Who holds the golden bell?'

2nd 'The third of the three robed figures
who stand in the circle of the moon,
the second holds a silver lance,
and the first a cup,
this cup gives forth a light
the colour of blood
and bathes the figures in that hue,
this cup is called Graal.'

1st 'Whom does the Graal serve?'

3rd voice
(narrator) 'Outside in the wasteland
the wind had quietened
to a low murmur
and upon the blistered ground
a small bud struggled through.'

As its petals began to open
the first delicate rays
of a gentle sun
fell to earth
and softly warmed its uncrowned head,
the blackthorn,
firstborn among the flowers of love.'



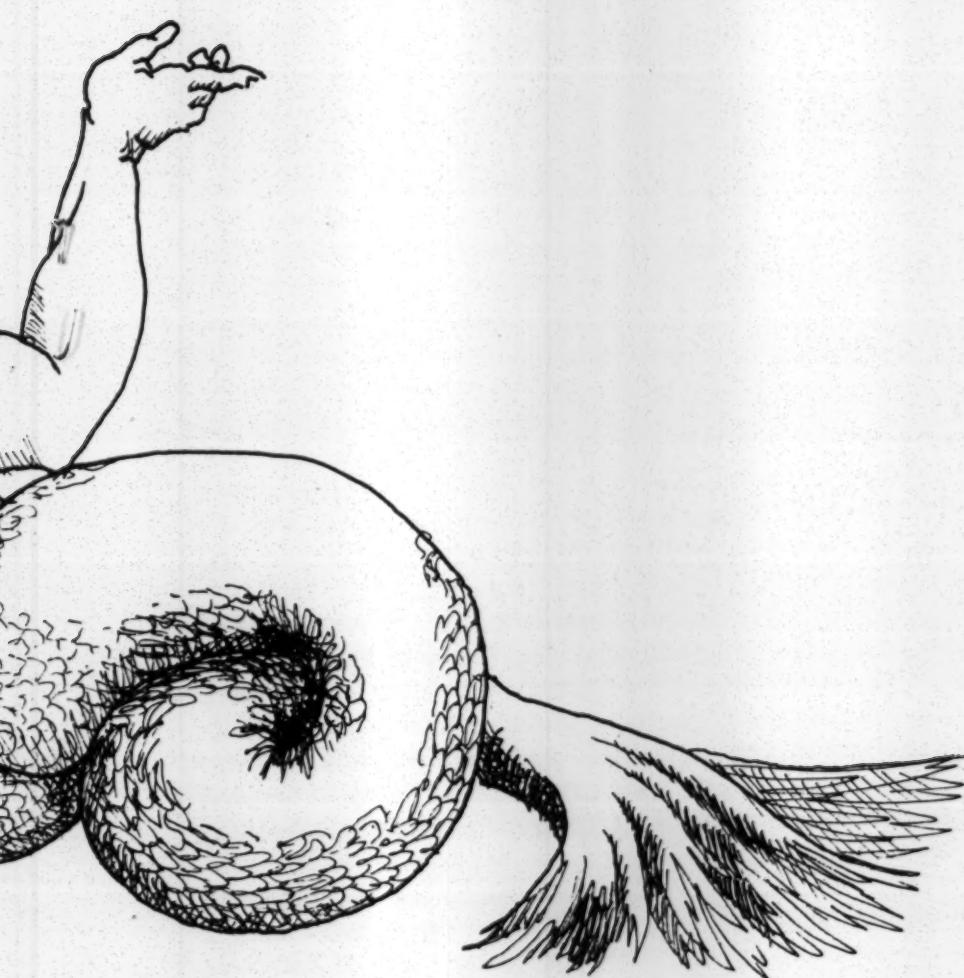
Song of Taliesin

The primary domestic bard
Am I to Elphin,
And my original country
Is in the region of the Cherubims.
Joannes the divine
Called me Merrdin
At length every king
Will call me Taliesin.
I was full nine months
In the womb of mother Cyridwen;
I was little Gwion heretofore,
Taliesin am I now.
I was with my Lord
In the superior state,
When Lucifer did fall
To the infernal deep
I have borne a banner
Before Alexander:
I know the names of the stars
From the north to Auster.
I have been in the circle of Gwdion
Tetragrammaton:
I conducted Hean
To the depths of Ebron vale,
I was in Canaan
When Absolom was slain,
I was in the court of Don
Before Gwdion was born,
I was an attendant
On Eli and Enoc;
I was on the cross-devoting sentence
Of the son of the merciful God.
I have been the chief keeper
Of the work of Nimrod's tower;
I have been three revolutions
In the circle of Arianrod.
I was in the Ark
With Noah and Alpha;
I beheld the destruction
Of Sodom and Gomorra;
I was in Africa
Before Rome was built;
I am come here
To the remnants of Troia
I was with my Lord
In the manger of the she ass;
I strengthened Moses
Through the Jordan water.
I have been in the firmament
With Mary Magdalen;
I have been gifted with genius
From the Cauldron of Cyridwen.
I have been bard of the harp
To Teon of Lochlyn;
I have endured hunger
For the Son of the Virgin.
I have been in White Hill
In the court of Cynvelyn,

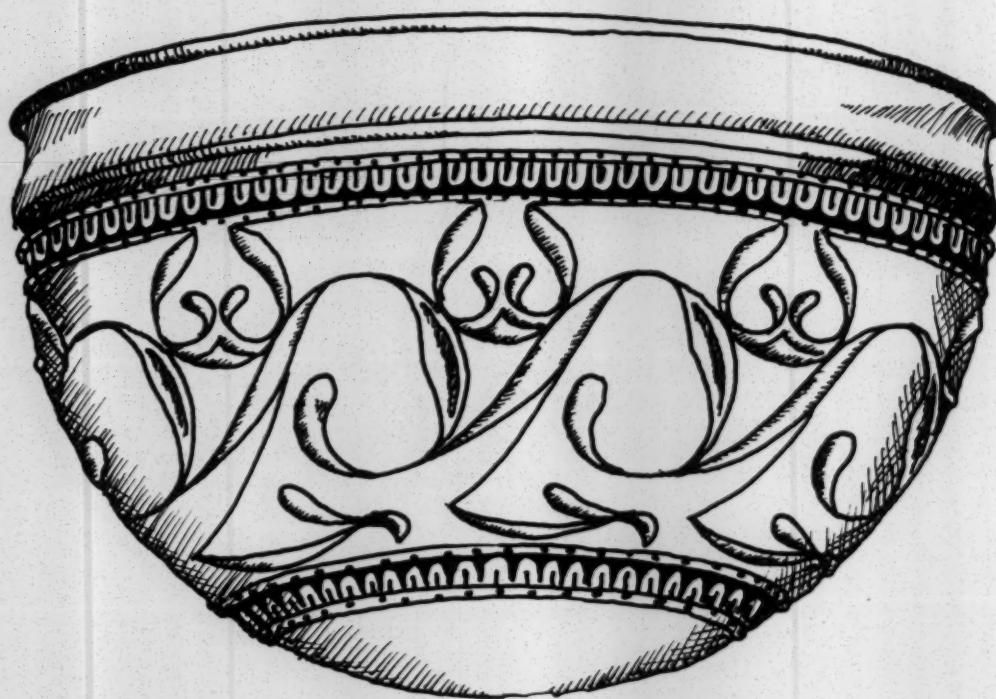
In stocks and fetters,
For a year and a day.
I have had my abode
In the kingdom of the Trinity:
It is not known what is my body
Whether flesh or fish.
I have been an instructor
To the whole universe:
I shall remain till the day of doom
On the face of the earth.
I have been in an agitated seat
Above the circle of Sidin
And that continues revolving
Between three elements:
Is it not a wonder of the world
That it reflects not a splendour?

(Appendix to the Historia Brittonum.)





The nature of the grail



(Prefatory note: the Grail legend, briefly, is about a mysterious life-giving object or vessel guarded by a maimed King whose health is related to the fertility of the land. The spell can only be broken, and the king and his land restored, by a pure and perfect questing knight who asks a certain question. In the medieval Grail stories, the magic object was christianised into the Cup used at the Last Supper and later brought to Glastonbury by Joseph of Arimathea.)

Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a Grail: many are unsuccessful in their Quest, but not for want of trying, for often, to them, the seeking is all but the finding of an experience beyond human imagining—and therefore to be dealt with as and when it comes. We tread our Maze of Life, we search when and where we choose after our own fashion, we enjoy the hypotheses, the speculations and the wonder. But the nature of our goal is hazy and we frequently mistake the rites of the Quest for the Question itself and its aftermath.

Occult meditation knows of a method, the object of which is self-knowledge or the discovery of the true self, in which a structure of symbols based on the Arthurian legends is built up in the imagination. A point of light is visualised in the mind's eye as situated in one's heart, is then expanded to form a 'round table' in the centre of which is a golden chalice. Seated at the table divided into twelve zodiacal segments, at one's own birth sign, one then concentrates, moving from human consciousness to consciousness 'to the power infinity', and the power of the chalice tapped; after which the exercise is reversed and the mandala withdrawn. (This 'magical' meditation has been independently employed in modern group psychotherapy.)

The religious experience involved may have approached the end result sought by the medieval alchemist, whose search for transmutation of metals disguised his search for an 'awakened' state, a spiritual 'liberation', the infinite patience of many years' mixing, heating and dissolving of his basic materials in his crucible, waiting for the sign that indicates the beginning of the end to a new beginning . . . The substances are transferred to a transparent sealed vessel and reheated again and

again to form an essence or fluorescent fluid known as 'raven's wing', which on contact with the air solidifies—the philosopher's stone of unknown, infinite potential. But the real transformation is in the alchemist himself, spiritual certainly, perhaps physical, the Great Work having caused mutations within him. His vision in the sealed crucible is akin to that of the meditator, to that of the Questor taken up into heaven.

The Meaning Beyond, the Absolute, which lies behind the symbolism of the Grail, fulfills and transcends it. As such the nature of the Grail itself is irrelevant compared with whom it serves or what it contains. But it gives an image, an apparent reality which can serve as a pivot to reaching out to the Infinite. And as such, the images vary. The 'chalice' is an attempt to christianise the Grail, just as the alchemist's crucible may be an attempt to explain it in terms of a proto-science. One model was pagan Celtic: the cauldron of Ceridwen (in Welsh) or of Dagda (in Irish legend), a liquid source of inspiration or an inexhaustible supplier of nourishment. Other models include a horn of plenty, a magic talisman, a casket, a platter, the philosopher's stone or even a scrying-crystal. Its symbolism is equally diverse—the void from which the Self emerges, the womb of the unconscious, the Ark of the New Covenant, an unidentifiable flying object

Many places claim the Grail for their own: Antioch (a chalice with an inner cup), Genoa (an 'emerald' bowl), and Valencia (a clay bowl or crucible) being the better known. The South of France, especially has very strong claims where the sect of the Albigenses or Catharists was persecuted c. 1207–1229 (the period of the flowering of the continental Grail stories) and where the troubadours had a particularly sure foothold. Local traditions of the Grail lying in a Pyrenean cave are coupled with attempts to prove that it was a cult object in the Gnostic tradition or a relic of the Cathars. At Nanteos near Aberystwyth is kept a fragile wooden cup no larger than a finger bowl, taken there after the dissolution of Glastonbury.

But the most hardy tradition of the Grail, like that of Arthur, is that it has passed away from human eyes, as Arthur has retreated to his cave or western isle, waiting for the moment ripe for the Return. The withdrawal of the Grail from the presence of the Knights of the Round Table signifies its disappearance into the Unconscious: unlike the Arthurian Return of a new Golden Age for all men, however, the return of the Grail is an individual's quest, the delving of the conscious into the unconscious, the hermit's search for religious experience, the alchemist's Great Work, and it is not limited to any one time or space. The only limitation is on the individual, for which the right attitude of mind is necessary, and the willingness to seek, discover, and learn.

Chris Lovegrove.

CAER SIDI AND THE CAULDRON OF CERIDWEN.

There is a theory, as yet unproven, that there is a maze pathway up the sides of Glastonbury Tor, and that the Tor may be the Caer Sidi or Spiral Castle of legend.

It was into the sacred mound that the Sun-King went at death and from which he emerged on resurrection. Here also the Cauldron of Ceridwen was housed: recurrent references are extant in poems under the name of Taliesin which show acquaintance with Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Pythagorean doctrines and reflections of Greek, Roman and Jewish history.

In Britain the tradition of Spiral Castle survives in the Easter Maze dance, the mazes being called Troy Town in England and, in Wales, Caer-droia. That the maze had a part in initiations of some sort is accepted theory. Some authorities state that initiates to the Eleusinian mysteries were required to tread the maze.

It was said that the Celtic cauldron of Inspiration and Plenty would not boil for a coward, and it is also said to be a Testing Talisman.

'The Spoils of Annwlyn' and 'Culwch' bear witness to some legend about a raid by Arthur and his men on the Otherworld, in which a magic cauldron and perhaps Arthur's wonderful sword were carried off to Britain.

The Celtic Otherworld is referred to again under the name Caer Sidi in another poem in the Book of Taliesin, and the description amplifies the picture:

"Well-appointed is my chair in Caer Sidi, sickness and old age do not afflict him who is in it: Manawydd and Pryderi know it. Three organs round the fire play before it, and around its corners are the streams of the ocean; and the fruitful fountain which is above it, sweeter than white wine is the drink in it."

J.F.



Catharism & The Celts

The Cathars.

1. the source.

It must firstly be explained that Catharism in this context is little more than a useful heading under which to group a large number of sects most of whose names denote the area (geographically) in which they were most active. For the most part their doctrines differ only slightly from the most famous of these sects (i.e. the Albigenses — centred around Albi in France) with the exception of the Waldenses whose doctrines differed widely from the above and should not, strictly, be considered under the same heading.

As to the source of the Heresy one must be careful to disentangle accusation from determination. For instance, the Catholic Church of the time, finding Dualist elements in the Albigensian doctrines, immediately cried Manichees! thus serving a dual purpose, that of conveniently labelling the Heresy and of stirring up the age-old hatred of Manichaeism in the hearts of all good Catholics. The label was both erroneous and libellous, for the Cathars show neither the influence nor the sinister overtones of a Manichaen creed.

Two other labels were levelled at them, with somewhat less vehemence:

1) the Priscellanism of Spain and 2) the Donatism of North Africa, neither of which is satisfactory.

This brings us to two currently held theories 1) that the Cathars had their beginnings in Arianism and 2) in Paulicianism. I have looked fairly thoroughly into the latter possibility and find the

evidence both plausible and convincing. It could be so for the former but for the fact that there is a case for confusing Arian semblances with Paulician actualities.

Nonetheless if the source or at least, influence, of Catharism be Bulgarian or Dalmatian, the reason for its widespread success was clearly the visibly corrupt and degenerate state of the contemporary Roman church.

2. the belief.

The following is taken from one of the most important documents on Cathar beliefs i.e. the list of errors of the Waldenses and Cathars compiled by Reineri Saccho who was both Cathar and later Inquisitor. It is reproduced in 'The Albigensian Heresy' by the Rev. H. J. Warner, M.A. Among the thirty-three errors of the Waldenses are:

- 2) Belief in Traducianism. 'The soul of the first man was made materially from the holy spirit and the rest through it by traduction.'
- 6) Any good man may be a son of God in the same way as Christ was, having a soul instead of a Godhead.
- 8) To adore or worship the body of Christ or any created thing, or Images or crosses is Idolatry.
- 9) Final penance avails nothing.
- 11) The souls of good men enter and leave their bodies without sin.
- 12) The punishment of Purgatory is nothing less than present trouble.
- 14) Prayers for the dead avail nothing.
- 15) Tents and other benefactions should be given to the poor and not to the priests.
- 18) They derided church music and canonical hours.
- 19) Prayers in Latin profit nothing because they are not understood (this is one of the main points of contact with the Paulician movement). Both heretical groups would hold services for the common people in their own language. This was considered by the contemporary Roman Church as an heretical act of the first order. One begins to see how the Catholic Church, apart from its obvious degeneracy, must have seemed to the common people of Europe to be a vast, powerful, and rather frightening heretic order, and the Cathars etc., with their exemplary behaviour, and comprehensible preaching, to be the true bringers of the Light and the Word of God, as indeed they were in this context.
- 23) The Roman Church is not the Head of the Church. It is a church of malignants.
- 24) Any man may divorce his wife and follow the sect, even if she is unwilling to be divorced, and vice versa. No-one can be saved outside their sect. (In the light of 6) and 11) above, and 3) and 6) below this last sounds somewhat suspect.)

Others among the thirty-three errors which are important follow:

- 1) Infant baptism profits nothing.
- 2) Mass is nothing as the apostles did not observe it.
- 3) A good layman has the power to absolve, whereas a bad priest has not.
- 4) Holy Orders, Extreme Unction and the tonsure were derided.
- 5) Everyone, without distinction of sex, may preach.
- 6) They despised all saints (save the Apostles), canonisation, relics, crosses, times and seasons, and held that the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles was sufficient for salvation without the statutes of the Church.
- 7) Public penance avails nothing.

As to the Cathars, opinions common to all the sects were,

- 1) The Devil made the world and all things in it (i.e. the Devil made all things visible and God all things invisible; this Dualism led to their being labelled Manichees by the early Catholic investigators).
- 2) All sacraments of the Church are of the Devil.
- 3) Carnal marriage is always a mortal sin.
- 4) There is no resurrection of the flesh.
- 5) It is a mortal sin to eat flesh, eggs etc.
- 6) It is a mortal sin for secular powers to punish heretics or malefactors.
- 7) There is no such thing as Purgatory.
- 8) To kill an animal is a great sin.
- 9) They had four sacraments a) Imposition of hands — called the Consolamentum and the saying of the Lord's prayer — but there is no remission of sins by this if the priest himself is in mortal sin. b) Benediction of bread (transubstantiation takes place in the hand of he who worthily receives, not in the hand of the priest). c) Penance. d) Orders.

To the Cathars of Toulouse.

- 1) There are two principles, good and evil.
- 2) There is no trinity in the Catholic sense, as the Father is greater than the Son and the Holy Ghost.
- 3) The world and all therein was created by an evil God.
- 4) They held some Valentinian ideas.
- 5) The Son of Man was not really incarnate in the Virgin Mary and did not eat (Docetism).
- 6) The Patriarchs were the servants of the devil.
- 7) The Devil was Author of the Old Testament, except Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes and major and minor Prophets. These being the more spiritual works in the testament.
- 8) The world will never end.
- 9) The Judgement is passed.
- 10) Hell is in this world.

Such may be the basic doctrines of the Cathars. There is a great deal more but I can only recommend that anyone wishing to go into it more deeply should read the relevant books noted at the end of this article.

Thus we have a simple and appealing Christianity, if a little pessimistic, which people could readily understand and believe in. The Cathars would appear to refute the dogma and ritual of the Roman Church and replace it with something a little simpler whereby the doctrines of Christ and the Apostles alone are sufficient for salvation.

Clearly they arose out of a social need for a tacitly good and understandable system of belief; even so, they were the subject of the Catholic Church's first home crusade, i.e. against a European Christian community. The struggle was long and arduous with many setbacks on both sides, but eventually the Romans won and in the records of the Inquisition (set up to deal with the Cathars) we find their defence rests upon numerous quotes from the Gospels, mainly from that of St. John, and that they were charged with harbouring a secret document (being the translation of the Apochryphal Narrative of the questions of St. John and the answers of Jesus Christ). And from another source, that the Parfaits (upon whom the Holy Spirit was thought to have descended) would carry with them at all times, in a leather pouch, the Gospel of St. John. Is there evidence here to suppose that their doctrines possessed a Johananine flavour? Perhaps, let us, now, compare them with what I have called,

The Celtic Christianity from Scotland.

I bathe my face
in the nine rays of the sun
as Mary bathed Her Son
in the rich fermented milk

I am smooring the fire
as the Son of Mary would smoor.

I will pluck the gracious Yarrow
that Christ plucked with His one hand.

Carmina Gadelica.

The above is a Scottish crofter's incantation. It reflects the beautiful simplicity of a way of life modelled on imitation and repetition of the ways of the family of God.

The contemporary Christianity from Iona was basically monastic and discretely evangelical. One has the impression that they converted the heathen more by example than by preaching, and it was they who undertook the conversion of the Saxons, not the romanised Celts of Wales and Cornwall.

They seem to possess, intermingled with their indisputably valid Christianity, the echoes of past religions; the early Celtic manuscripts are often cryptic containing strange riddles and very complex Angelologies. All this goes to make up what Geoffrey Ashe has called 'a sense of Something Else,' concerning the Celtic church which led to a confrontation with the newly arrived Roman church in 663 A.D.

In 597 A.D. Roman influence came to Britain in the shape of St. Augustine's mission and, inevitably, as his influence spread northward and the Celts southward, the two evangelical forces met, therefrom sprang the aforementioned controversy.

In 663 A.D. the Synod of Whitby was called to deal with some seemingly minor variations in practice between the Celtic and Roman churches, the main point of contention being that the Celts did not keep Easter in accordance with the Romans.

At the Synod, representing the Celts were King Oswy of Northumbria and his bishop, Colman, and for the Romans, Bishop Agilbert of the West Saxons. Colman argued that their method for keeping Easter was in accordance with the Gospel of St. John (in fact Colman rests his whole case on the importance of John's gospel) in that St. John celebrated Easter beginning on the fourteenth day of the first month, not regarding whether it fell upon the Sabbath or any other day, whereas Peter in Rome preached that Easter should be observed upon the First Sunday after the fourteenth day.

This was the mainstay of the confrontation and Agilbert, upholding the Petrine doctrines, reminded the King that it was Peter who held the keys of Heaven. Oswy, fearing that he might not be let in, acquiesced and commanded his Bishop and Clergy to observe the Roman Easter.

The whole episode may well seem farcical, but note well that it was over this issue that Bishop Colman, at that time head of the Scottish church, resigned his See(!) and returned to Scotland with a number of adherents rather than accept the Roman ruling.

There were other matters of variation in dispute at this time, viz. the wearing of the tonsure; Roman monks wore a tonsure whereby the head was shaven all bar a circle around the head, whereas the Celts wore what was called 'the tonsure Simon Magus' (said to be the Simon of Acts VIII). Neither did they deny that it was so but preferred to say it was derived from St. John.

They dispensed with public penance — as did the Catholics later. It was said that Scottish monks may have prayed with outstretched arms and celebrated other feasts on different days. Bede hints tantalisingly at 'other variances' but is not specific.

Nonetheless these discrepancies are hardly enough to account for the apparent hatred between the two parties; Geoffrey Ashe records that when the adherents of Rome came to Wales they were made to undergo forty days' penance for their religion! Moreover the Celts would not eat with them and ostentatiously scoured plates used by them.

He goes on to say that the unusual acrimony between the two may be attributed to the aforementioned 'Sense of Something Else' which the Celts had and the Romans seemingly did not and points out that the Celts may have been aware of the concept of a secret Johnanine succession within the Church preserving his doctrines until such time as the Age of Johnanine Christianity should supersede that of the Petrine, and that this might have been what they imagined they were concealing.

This seems a perfectly logical assumption since the whole Celtic case rested upon the doctrines of St. John and secondarily those of St. Columba, St. Aidan, and St Finan. Also, this sustains the picture of beautiful simplicity that one associates with the Christianity of Iona.

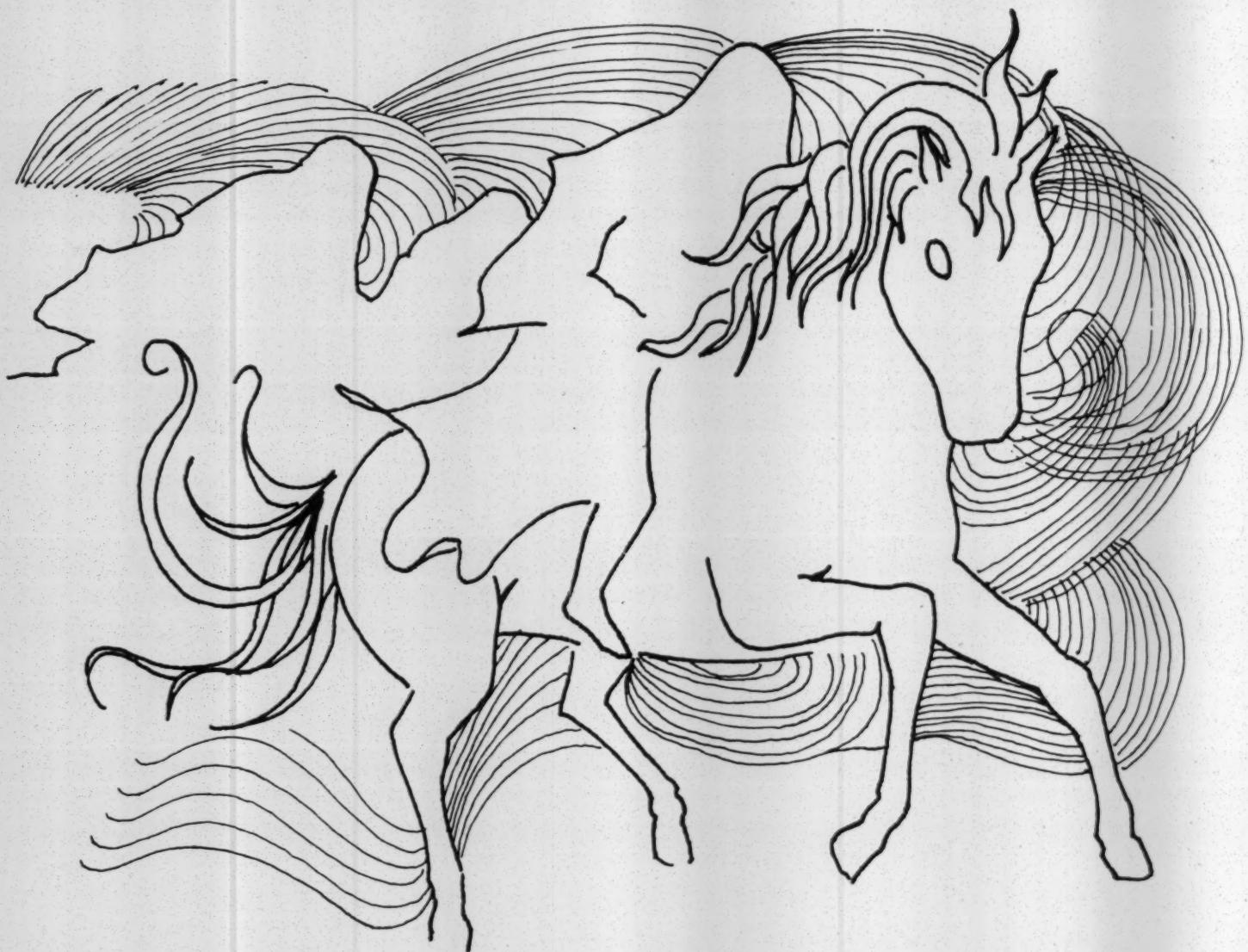
To conclude, I am not going to attempt to forge a dynamic link between the Cathars and the Celts, the facts as laid out above suggest divergent doctrines on at least one major issue, viz. the dualism of the Cathars. However, the atmospheres of the two are surely similar and perhaps it could be that they are different previews of the same event, false dawns as it were of the Johnanine era.

As a matter of fact, there is a case for a more durable link between the Celts and Catharism. This would involve lengthy discussion of the Gnostic elements of earlier Celtic Christianity, the genealogy of Arthur and his lieutenants and inevitably the Holy Grail. Unfortunately, I have neither the time nor the space to go into this, but I hope it may provide material for another article later. I can only now suggest that anyone wishing to explore further might be well advised to read, if they can obtain it, 'The Pyrenean Grail' by M. B. Luc which propounds the theory that the Grail may have, at some time, been a cult-object of the Cathars (see also 'The Nature of the Grail' by Chris Lovegrove).

Roger Davie Webster.

Bibliography:

- 'The Albigensian Heresy', the Rev. H. J. Warner, M.A.
- 'The Catholic Encyclopaedia'.
- 'The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics'.
- 'The Cathars and Reincarnation', A. Guirdham.
- 'The Ecclesiastical History of Britain', Bede.
- 'King Arthur's Avalon', Geoffrey Ashe.
- 'Celtic Heritage', A. & B. Rees.
- 'The *Carmina Gadelica*', (trans. A. Carmichael, 1928).
- 'The Grail Legend', E. Jung.
- 'The Pyrenean Grail', B. Luc.
- 'The Medieval Manichee', by Stephen Runcorn 1948 (1955)
- 'The Bogomils', by S. Obolensky 1948 (Reprint 1971).



The wild hunt

The Celts regarded physical death as a slight act of transition from one state of consciousness to another. They were so sure of this fact that they were willing to sign and accept I.O.U's which could be redeemed in some future state. This future state might be distant in time and place but would not be beyond the limits of the known world.

The Wild Hunt was a tradition that the Celts brought with them all across Europe. The Chief Huntsman was Gwyn ap Nab and from time to time he and his horsemen could be heard galloping across the countryside at night, rounding up the souls of the departed. Local heroes were always members of the Hunt.

In the Glastonbury area Arthur is one of those heroes to ride always with The Hunt. There are people living in the Cadbury area who will tell you that they have heard The Hunt galloping by, and that all the local dogs will start barking, yet no one can ever see anyone.

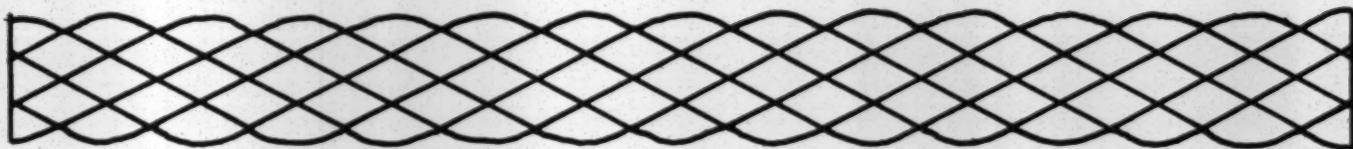
In "The Listener" for Nov. 27th, 1969, Mr. Ian Roger wrote:—

"An old countryman once told me about The Hunt. Though he was unaware of it, he was echoing here a belief in the capacities of the Wild Hunt or Odin's Jagt. Belief in the existence of the hunt and of the headless horsemen is curiously persistent. Legends of the phantom were carried by migrants to America and Australia . . . A headless man on a horse or in some kind of vehicle is a powerful symbol of life persisting after death. A figure suggestive of a headless horseman is to be found in murals recently discovered in Turkey which date from about 6000 B.C. . . .

It seemed to me that archaeology ought to pay more attention to headless horsemen legends particularly when they are related to stories about the building of a church."

J.F.

ARE YOU WEARING AN ARAN SWEATER ?



If so, why? And does the pattern do anything for you?
Consider the design.

THE Diamond:

A single moss stitch reversed on alternate rows, symbolising wealth.

THE Zig-Zag:

Knitted stitches moved diagonally across a purl panel to represent the twisting cliff paths along the shore.

THE Double Zig-Zag:

Also known as Marriage Lines.

Cables:

To represent fishermens' ropes.

THE Tree of Life:

Signifies long life and strong sons to carry on.

THE Ladder of Life:

Symbolises man's earthly climb to eternal happiness.

THE Trellis:

An intricate pattern. If a fisherman was drowned he could be recognised by the pattern on his jersey.

THE Honeycomb:

Looks like its name. Represents the hard work of a busy bee and a just reward.

THE Spoon Stitch:

Lovers' Spoon ? Lovers' Pattern ?

THE TRINITY STITCH:

Made by making "three from one and one from three" across the panel.

'Knitting' derives from the old Saxon word 'cynttan', and that itself is derived from 'cnotta', the intertwining parts of one or more ropes forming a knot.

Popular belief is that knitting originated in the 14th century; in fact it goes back to Coptic and probably Biblical times, if not earlier still.

In a book called, "The Sacred History of Knitting", the author, Mr. Heinz Kiewe of Oxford, gives a history of the Aran patterns as he traced them.

"To the Isle of Aran, we learn — at the end of the 5th century — the old sea-route to Western France and the Mediterranean route of the wine trade remained open in some degree in spite of the Barbarians, and it seems most likely that there were direct contacts between Ireland and Egypt where the Copts, the Christian Jacobites of Egypt, wove their famous interlace tapestries in abstract design as the Holy Law of the Bible commanded. We then hear that 'with the return of St. Enda from Candida Casa (Whithorn in Galloway, Scotland) where there was monasticism of the Egyptian type, there was founded a monastery of the Aran Isles where he and his companions followed a rule of great severity, and where a revolution in the character of the Irish Church began.'

The beginning of civilisation of craft on the islands was then in the hands of the monks who brought with them to the North, patterns of the Coptic designs, with which they created formal abstract interlace patterns in their illuminated Bibles, Missals, Crosses, Croziers (Bishops' Staffs) and carved stone crosses . . . I give a glossary from the Gaelic English dictionary on the word CRIOS pronounced Kress . . . a girdle, belt, strap, the waist, gird belt.

Criosadiar . . . Belt-maker.

Criosdail . . . Christian-like.

Crios-muinel . . . necklace.

Criosdachd . . . Christianity.

Crioslach . . . to gird, bind.

Crios Neimhe . . . the Zodiac.

The early history of knitting is largely unknown because, unlike pottery which can be excavated in mint condition, wool deteriorates with great age.

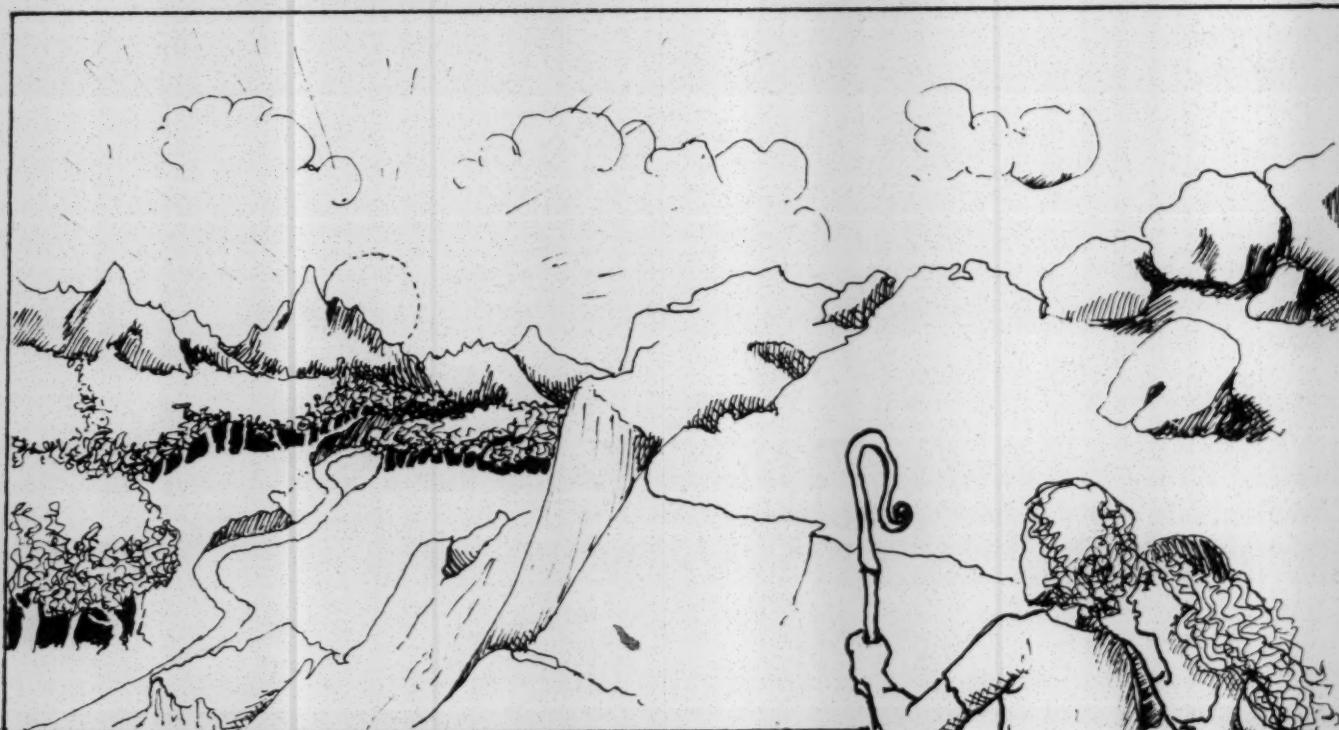
Mr. Kiewe's researches began by his interest in sculptures in Norman churches. He had been excited by the gnome-like heads in Iffley church, Oxford, and in Reading Abbey — apparently wearing

knitted caps. At this point he was asked if he had seen the sculptures in the church at Kilpeck in Herefordshire in which the figures looked as if they were wearing Aran knitting. He went there, post haste, and identified some of the figures on the south door as wearing hand-knitted sweaters in Chevron stitch rib . . . After much research he felt that he might have discovered the knitted apparel used by the Celts of the Dark Age for he came to the conclusion that the figures in the Norman sculptures were not Norman at all; they were the work of Norman sculptors but these sculptors employed Welsh stonemasons, and the stonemasons had portrayed the people of Archenfield as they were in the way they dressed, not only in the 12th century but probably as they were in the Dark Age.

Take a look at some of the sculptured knights in our old churches and you'll see that many of them look as if they're wearing hand-knitted Balaclava helmets. Did knitting give someone the idea for chain-mail?

J.F.

AMERGIN



I am the wind which breathes upon the sea,
I am the wave of the ocean,
I am the murmur of the billows,
I am the ox of the seven combats
I am the vulture upon the rocks,
I am a beam of the sun,
I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valour,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of science,
I am the point of the lance in battle,
I am the God who creates in the head, the fire.

Who is it who throws light into the meeting on the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?

(Oxford book of English mystical verse.)

Amergin.anon. date unknown.

The Once and Aquarian King

Our time began when Roman Kelt
our Arthur god begat:
first hero from our vat
of myth where love and valour melt.

Our time return when wholly knight
our life infirm reform:
The spirit wind blows warm:
dawn star to sun leaps Arthur's light.

This time let Merlin quest the Grail.
Gray sage: arrange the age
with kingly men, with kindly goal,
with all of earth the stage.

Artorius! Artorius!
Rex quondam: rex Aquarius.

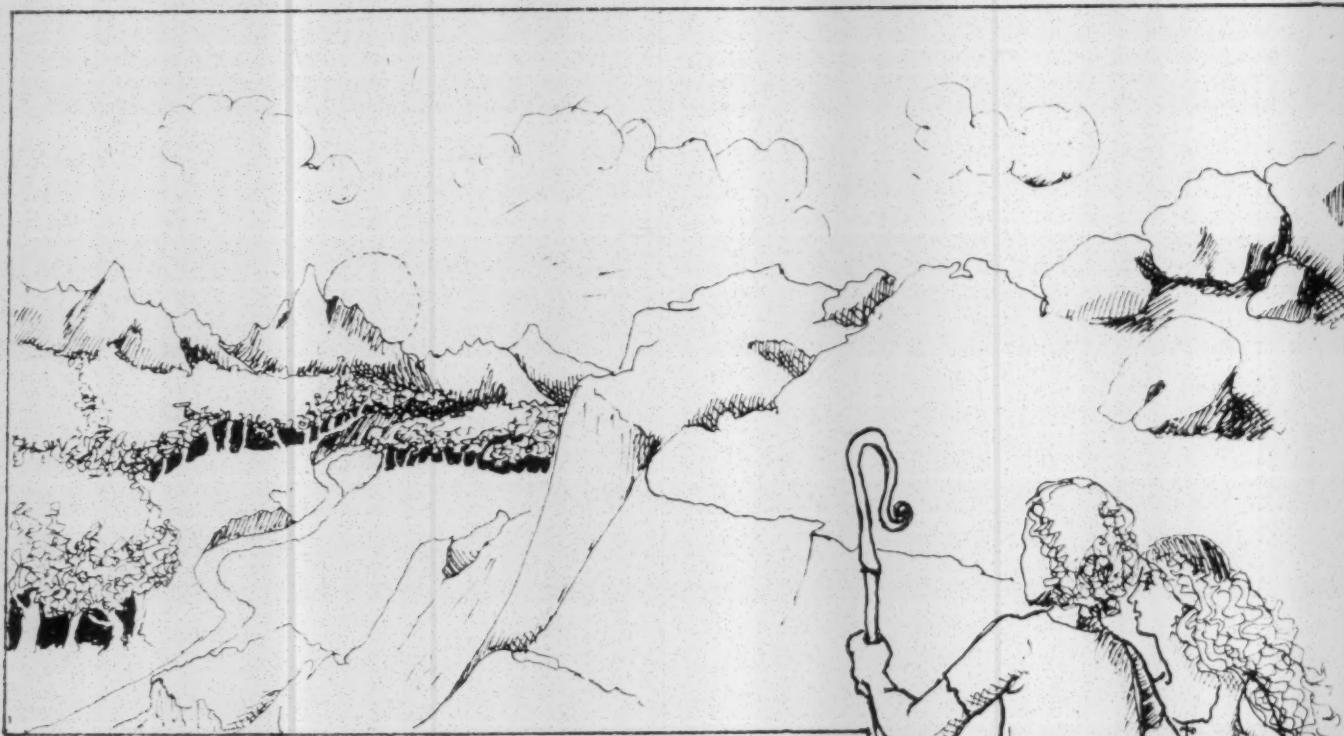
John Badger.

knitted caps. At this point he was asked if he had seen the sculptures in the church at Kilpeck in Herefordshire in which the figures looked as if they were wearing Aran knitting. He went there, post haste, and identified some of the figures on the south door as wearing hand-knitted sweaters in Chevron stitch rib . . . After much research he felt that he might have discovered the knitted apparel used by the Celts of the Dark Age for he came to the conclusion that the figures in the Norman sculptures were not Norman at all; they were the work of Norman sculptors but these sculptors employed Welsh stonemasons, and the stonemasons had portrayed the people of Archenfield as they were in the way they dressed, not only in the 12th century but probably as they were in the Dark Age.

Take a look at some of the sculptured knights in our old churches and you'll see that many of them look as if they're wearing hand-knitted Balaclava helmets. Did knitting give someone the idea for chain-mail?

J.F.

AMERGIN



I am the wind which breathes upon the sea,
I am the wave of the ocean,
I am the murmur of the billows,
I am the ox of the seven combats
I am the vulture upon the rocks,
I am a beam of the sun,
I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valour,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of science,
I am the point of the lance in battle,
I am the God who creates in the head, the fire.

Who is it who throws light into the meeting on the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?

(Oxford book of English mystical verse.)

Amergin.anon. date unknown.

The Once and Aquarian King

Our time began when Roman Kelt
our Arthur god begat:
first hero from our vat
of myth where love and valour melt.

Our time return when wholly knight
our life infirm reform.
The spirit wind blows warm:
dawn star to sun leaps Arthur's light.

This time let Merlin quest the Grail.
Gray sage: arrange the age
with kingly men, with kindly goal,
with all of earth the stage.

Ar tor ius! Ar tor ius!
Rex quondam: rex Aquarius.

John Badger.

